

a1 provides uniform adhesion and contact of cushion gum 34 to crown 27 causing the cushion gum edge to substantially contact casing 22 wrinkle-free and further reduces the need for providing extra strips of cushion gum along shoulders 21 of crown 27 (i.e., cushion gum stripping).

Q2 [Replace the paragraph beginning at page 11, line 20 with:

After cushion gum 34 has been applied to casing 22, rollers 40 are moved to engage and provide a force onto cushion gum 34. Casing 22 is rotated while rollers 40 provide a force, in a direction indicated by arrow 38 in FIG. 4, onto cushion gum 34. In an exemplary embodiment, wheels 40 begin in the middle of crown 27 and, during subsequent rotations, wheels 40 are moved towards shoulders 21 of crown 27 in the directions indicated by arrows 41. This operation, often referred to as stitching, provides desirable adherence of cushion gum 34 to the surface of casing 22 (crown 27 and shoulders 21), while aiding in removing any trapped air pockets between cushion gum 34 and casing 22. After the stitching operation is completed, a measurement of the circumference of tire casing 22 plus cushion gum layer 34 is taken by measurement wheel 50 as casing 22 is rotated. Polyethylene layer 35 is then removed.

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel, without prejudice, claims ~~1-13~~ and ~~21~~.